

REMARKS

Claims 1, 7, 8, 18, 24, and 25 remain pending in this application. Claims 2-6, 9-17, 19-23 and 26-48 have been withdrawn from further consideration, without prejudice, as being drawn to non-elected inventions or species.

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 7, 18, and 24

Claims 1, 7, 18, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Brandt (US 5,892,905) in view of McCaslin (US 6,868,397). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Brandt in view of McCaslin fails to disclose at least the following claim elements as recited in claim 1 (and claim 7, which depends from claim 1):

the users of the plurality of dealerships accessing the computer-server of the plurality of dealerships in order to access rental equipment inventory information for the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships in order to assist customers of the plurality of rental locations;

via a computer-terminal, displaying a reservation summary having reservation information pertaining to the type of rental equipment reserved and the date of reservation for each piece of rental equipment for a plurality of customer reservations of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

via the computer-server, tracking and searching rental equipment inventory information including the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location for managing rental equipment availability at the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships;

wherein via the computer-terminal communicating with the computer-server, each user can search and display the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

wherein via the computer-server the rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in the plurality of dealerships is accessible via the network by all of the other rental locations on the network.

Brandt in view of McCaslin fails to disclose at least the following claim elements as recited in claim 18 (and claim 24, which depends from claim 18):

the plurality of rental locations on a network of a plurality of dealerships, wherein users of the plurality of dealerships accessing a computer-server of the plurality of dealerships in order to access rental equipment inventory information for the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships in order to assist customers of the plurality of rental locations;

via a computer-terminal, displaying on a screen in communication with a computer a reservation summary having reservation information pertaining to the type of rental equipment reserved and the date of reservation for each piece of rental equipment for a plurality of customer reservations of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships;

via the computer-server, tracking and searching rental equipment inventory information including the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location for managing rental equipment availability at the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

wherein via the computer-terminal communicating with the computer-server, each user can search and display the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and exclude the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

via the computer-server, making the reservation information and the rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in the plurality of dealerships accessible via the network by all of the other rental locations of the plurality of locations.

Brandt discloses a computer system for providing a common user interface for software applications accessed via the world-wide-web (WWW). See Brandt, column 9, lines 7-11.

1. Brandt fails to teach, advise, or suggest computer network, plurality of dealerships, and “user” of dealerships versus “customer” of rental locations

First, Brandt fails to teach, advise, or suggest “the users of the plurality of dealerships accessing the computer-server of the plurality of dealerships in order to access rental equipment inventory information for the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships in order to assist customers of the plurality of rental locations” as recited in claim 1 or “the plurality of rental locations on a network of a plurality of dealerships, wherein users of the plurality of dealerships accessing a computer-server of the plurality of dealerships in order to access rental equipment inventory information for the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships in order to assist customers of the plurality of rental locations” as recited in claim 18.

a) Computer network versus network of people

In Brandt, any mention of a “network” is for a large number of people within a company to be able to communicate simultaneously over the network with a software application running on a single computer system. See Brandt, column 1, line 64 to column 2, line 2.

b) No plurality

Also, in the car rental example of Brandt, the user accesses one rental car agency to make a reservation, not a plurality of rental car agencies. See Brandt, column 23, lines 44-46.

c) “User” of dealership versus “customer” of rental locations

Even further, Brandt fails to disclose a “user” and a “customer” as recited in the claims. The “user” in Brandt is the customer of a car rental agency; whereas, in claims 1 and 18, the “user” is of the network of the plurality of dealerships and not a user of the rental locations. The “customer of the plurality of rental locations” is distinguishable from the “users of the plurality of dealerships”, which Brandt fails to account for and fails to distinguish. Rather, Brandt only discloses the alleged “customers of the plurality of rental locations” (allegedly the customers of the car rental agency). There is no distinction made in Brandt between “users of the plurality of dealerships” and “customers of the plurality of rental locations” as recited in the claims.

2. Brandt fails to teach, advise, or suggest plurality of rental locations in plurality of dealerships

Second, Brandt fails to teach, advise, or suggest accessing rental equipment inventory information “for the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships in order to assist customers of the plurality of rental locations” as recited in claim 1 and claim 18.

In Brandt, not only is there no plurality of rental locations, but the plurality of rental locations are not on a network of a plurality of dealerships.

3. Brandt fails to teach, advise, or suggest plurality of customer reservations of rental locations in dealerships

Third, Brandt fails to teach, advise, or suggest “displaying a reservation summary... for each piece of rental equipment for a plurality of customer reservations of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships” as recited in claim 1 or “displaying...a reservation summary...for each piece of rental equipment for a plurality of customer reservations of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships” as recited in claim 18.

In the car rental example of Brandt, the customer reservation is for one user and not for a plurality of customer reservations. Moreover, the one user is accessing one rental car agency and not a plurality of rental locations. Still further, the one rental car agency is not “a plurality of dealerships” as recited in claims 1 and 18.

4. Brandt in view of McCaslin teach opposite of tracking and searching for rental locations

Fourth, Brandt in view of McCaslin fails to teach, advise, or suggest “tracking and searching rental equipment inventory information...for managing rental equipment availability at the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships” as recited in claim 1 or “tracking and searching rental equipment inventory information...for managing rental equipment availability at the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships” as recited in claim 18.

Rather, McCaslin does the opposite of tracking rental equipment inventory information for each rental location (allegedly each service center). In McCaslin, the tracking of the inventory information is for the central hub and not each service center. Moreover, the tracking in McCaslin is not for each rental location in a plurality of dealerships. See McCaslin, column 16, lines 3-7.

5. Brandt in view of McCaslin teaches away from search and display number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental

Fifth, Brandt in view of McCaslin fails to teach, advise, or suggest “each user can search and display the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships” as recited in claim 1 or “each user can search and display the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and exclude the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships” as recited in claim 18.

McCaslin discloses an information system for tracking, monitoring, and evaluating equipment inventory used by electric utility distribution companies. See McCaslin, column 1,

lines 1-34. This system addresses the problem of tracking equipment inventory in order to fill orders from a central inventory location and to retrieve equipment back to the central inventory location. See McCaslin, column 8, line 64 to column 9, line 5, and FIG. 5.

Significantly, Brandt specifies that if there are not qualifying matches for a car, then the rental agent's screen "would not contain information on available cars since there is no qualifying match for a car at the requested city". Brandt further specifies that there would be an option to move a car that matches the request from an alternative location. However, this feature in Brandt teaches away from the claimed invention, namely, the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental. Brandt only teaches moving a car from an alternative location, which teaches away from "the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental" as claimed. McCaslin fails to make-up for the shortcomings of Brandt. Regardless, Brandt teaches away from the claimed invention.

McCaslin does not disclose each user can search and display the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental. Also, McCaslin fails to disclose each user can exclude the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental.

Moreover, even if McCaslin discloses the central inventory location and several service centers, McCaslin fails to disclose the central inventory location and several service centers are in a plurality of dealerships. Rather, just like in Brandt, the central inventory location and several service centers are a part of one company and not a plurality of rental locations and not within a plurality of dealerships.

6. Brandt in view of McCaslin fails to teach, advise, or suggest via computer-server, rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in dealerships is accessible via network by all rental locations on network

Sixth, Brandt in view of McCaslin fails to teach, advise, or suggest "wherein via the computer-server the rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in the plurality of dealerships is accessible via the network by all of the other rental locations on the network" as recited in claim 1 or "via the computer-server, making the reservation information and the rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in the plurality of

dealerships accessible via the network by all of the other rental locations of the plurality of locations" as recited in claim 18.

Neither Brandt nor McCaslin disclose using a computer-server of a plurality of dealerships or to make rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in a plurality of dealerships accessible via the network of a plurality of dealerships to other rental locations.

Thus, Brandt in view of McCaslin fails to teach, advise, or suggest one or more missing claimed elements as recited in claim 1 (and claim 7, which depends from claim 1) and claim 18 (and claim 24, which depends from claim 18), so that claims 1, 7, 18, and 24 are patentable over Brandt in view of McCaslin.

Claims 8 and 25

Claims 8 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Brandt (U.S. Patent No. 5,892,905) in view of McCaslin (U.S. Patent No. 6,868,397) and further in view of Craig (U.S. Patent No. 6,266,809).

In light of the foregoing remarks in connection with claim 1 (from which claim 8 variously depends) and claim 18 (from which claim 25 variously depends), Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Furthermore, Applicant incorporates by reference Applicant's previous remarks in connection with claims 8 and 25 and the Craig reference. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 8 and 25 are patentable over Brandt, McCaslin, and Craig, taken either alone or in combination.

Conclusion

Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that the subject application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is thus requested. Applicant invites the Office to telephone the undersigned attorney if he or she has any questions whatsoever regarding this Response or the subject application in general. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees to maintain this application or to deposit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 503289.

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Respectfully submitted,



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